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A. M. GAY,* EDITOR OF THIS NUMBER.

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SCHOOL-KEEPING.

PRIZES are now being offered to the pupils at training schools in several English counties, for the purpose of promoting a knowledge of the art of conveying sound instruction in common things to the children of the working classes. In the movement that has thus been set on foot by Lord Ashburton, the whole English public claims to participate; the need of much more sense in school-teaching, and even (with reverence be it said) in university systems, is so very obvious, that Lord Ashburton's suggestion has gone off like a gun in a rookery, and has set every quill flying.

Doctor Quemaribus declares to all friends and parents in his private circle, that his school is exempt from the prevailing attack. Public opinion seizes upon schools now like an epidemic, and, as is the way with epidemics, fastens with most severity on those that happen to be in a bad condition. Dr. Q. pronounces his own school to be intact, for does he not give object-lessons to his junior boys? does he not provide lectures on chemistry for all the boys? does he not teach the elders botany? I, for my own part, do not agree with Mr. Quemaribus in his opinion of the state of his own kingdom at Verbumpersonale College. I have the highest respect for that distinguished LL.D. I know, too, that he is a good, earnest man, and that the boys he turns out do him credit. They possess much knowledge, though they are not well educated—for to know much and to be well educated are two perfectly distinct things—and they are gentlemen. They leave school with a respect for their teacher, and they grow up excellent people. When the hairs of Dr. Quemaribus shall have become white, and when his voice of power shall have become

* The November No. of the "Teacher" should have been accredited to Mr. William L. Gage, Principal of the High School, Taunton.

weak and thin, there shall collect together stalwart men, tradesmen and merchants, quick lawyers and slow divines, and shall dine in his honor, and acknowledge him their friend, present plate to him, and comfort him with words of generous and loving recognition. He will deserve all they may say of him or do for him. There is a legion of quack educators in the land, but the principal of Verbumpersonale College is not one of them.

There are thousands of fine-hearted and full-headed Quemaribus in all ranks of the scholastic profession. I believe, in my heart, that as there is not a happier or nobler occupation in the world than that of developing the minds that are to work in the next generation, so there are in this country very many good men now occupied in teaching children conscientiously and with exceeding care.

Yet, upon this subject of teaching I have long had crotchets of my own, of which Dr. Quemaribus and many other clever men used to declare to me that they were purely theoretical, that they were quite impossible of execution. Every practical man would tell me so. Every practical man did tell me so. "My dear fellow," said Quemaribus, "it is a very pretty amusement to plan model school systems, but you don't know the difficulties with which we have to contend. There is not time for all you would have done, and you set out with a wrong notion of the nature of a boy. Your method never could be worked." "Doctor," I said, "by the thunder of Jove, and by the whistle of the steam engine, I'll try." "Then," said the doctor, "if you mean that seriously, you are mad. Every man will say so when he sees you lay your bread and butter down to make a harlequin's leap out of one profession into another—out of a business you understand into one of which, permit me to say, you know nothing whatever. And how will you try? Where will you go?" "I will go into some town where there are a great many people, and say plainly: Thus I desire to teach. There may be a dozen who will answer, fanciful as you think me, Thus I desire my children to be taught."

I carried out that scheme and met with the result that I expected. After two years of school-keeping, during which I put my crotchets to a full and severe test, I left in a town which I had entered as a stranger, some of the best friends I have ever made or ever shall make. I left there, also, children whom I never shall forget, by whom too I hope never to be forgotten. Moreover, I did not lose money by the venture; in a commercial sense, the experiment succeeded to my perfect satisfaction.

When it is possible to add a demonstration to a theory, it ought to be done, and it would certainly be unjust towards the

little crotchets that I here wish to set forth if I did not (as in truth I can) make evident that they are something more to me than idle fantasies. At the same time, let nobody interpret anything here said as a puff composed during the Christmas holidays for the replenishing of anybody's forms ; the writer's occupation as a schoolmaster is over, he has now no school and takes no pupils, nor can he name any school in this country that is carried on according to his plan. Furthermore let it be said that if he did know of such a school, it is quite possible that he might entertain a low opinion of it, for a reason that will be made evident by the crotchet next and first to be detailed.

Crotchet the First. Concerning plans of teaching. Nobody has any right to impose his plan of teaching on his neighbor. There is no method that may call itself *the* method of education. There is only one set of right principles, but there may be ten thousand plans. Every teacher must work for himself as every man of the world works for himself. There is for all men in society only one set of right principles, yet you shall see a thousand men in one town all obeying them, although all in conduct absolutely differ from one another. They will present among themselves the widest contrasts, and yet every one may be prospering and making friends. Thompson talks little, avoids company, sticks to a few good friends, and does his work in a snug corner. Wilson speaks freely and cheerily, delights in associating with his fellows, and works with a throng of helping hands about him. Jackson is nervous, fidgety, and constitutionally irritable ; he does his duty, though, and gains his end. Robson, on the contrary, is of an easy temper, lets a worry rest, and never touches it when he comes near ; he does his duty, too, and gains his end. But, let the shy Thompson undertake to make his way in the world by being, like Wilson, sociable and jolly ; and he will make himself contemptible by clumsy efforts, and the end of them will be a dismal failure. In the school, as in the world, a man must be himself if he would have more than a spurious success : he must be modelled upon nobody. The schoolmaster should read books of education, and he may study hard to reason out for himself by their aid, if he can, what are the right principles to go upon. A principle that he approves, he must adopt ; but, another man's plan that he approves, he must assimilate to the nature of his own mind and of his own school before he can adopt it. Even his school he must so manage that it shall admit of great variety of plan within itself, and suffer him so to work in it as to appeal in the most effective way to the mind of each one of his scholars.

The practical suggestion that arises from this crotchet, is, that each teacher should take pains not to make an abstraction

of himself, but to throw the whole of his individuality into his work ; to think out for himself a system that shall be himself ; that shall be animated by his heart and brain, naturally and in every part ; that shall beat as it were with his own pulse, breathe his own breath, and, in short, be alive.

Crotchet the Second. Upon the qualifications of the teacher. He may be mild or sharp, phlegmatic or passionate, gentle or severe, he may thrash or not thrash—but I would rather he did not thrash. As men differ and must differ, so must teachers, so must schools. But, no man can be a good teacher who is a cut and dried man without any particular character : his individuality must be strongly marked. He should be, of course, a man of unimpeachable integrity, detesting what is base or mean, and beyond everything hating a lie. He should have pleasure in his work, be fond of children, and not think of looking down upon them, but put faith—and that is a main point which many teachers will refuse to uphold—put faith in the good spirit of childhood. He must honor a child or he cannot educate it, though he may cram many facts into its head. It is essential also to the constitution of a good teacher, that, whatever his character may be, he shall not be slow. Children are not so constituted as to be able to endure slowness patiently. He must also not be destitute of imagination, for he will have quick imaginations to develop and to satisfy.

Furthermore it is essential that he should deeply feel the importance of his office, and utterly disdain to cringe to any parent, or to haggle for the price of services that no money can fairly measure. In all that I here say, I speak with direct reference to schools for the children of those people who are well to do in the world, and can afford to support the kind of teacher they desire. Schools of that kind ought to be in the hands of men trained long and carefully in many studies. Assistant teachers should be men qualified to aid, by undertaking, each a single branch of study in which they have obtained perfection ; but the head of a school should carry its brains and be, as nearly as he may be, versed in all its business. It is not for him to teach a speciality, but to command respect by the breadth of his attainments, to link all parts of his plan together, and unite them in the boys' minds into one great whole. He should add to his classical knowledge an acquaintance with, at the very least, two modern languages ; he should know how to account for, and to make comprehensible to boys, the reasonings of mathematics ; he should have studied and be able to teach, the history of the world as a whole ; he should be well read in books of travel, and have a full elementary knowledge of the entire circle of the sciences. He should be well read in the literature of several countries and of his

own day ; he should study the political and social movements that are going on about him, and employ even the news of the day in his teaching, by applying it to school knowledge and knowledge to it. He should be able to bring every study into visible subservience to the best and commonest aims of life, showing the children at once how to think and how to make all acquired knowledge available and helpful in their daily work. All this may be too much for one man ; but it is not too much for one man and a library. The proper breadth of cultivation given, depth must be maintained by constant and habitual study. The most learned teacher ought incessantly to read and think, so that he may be on each topic as full-minded as he should be when he proposes to give lessons to a child. The good teacher must be devoted to his work ; if he wants pleasure and excitement, he must find them in the school-room and the study. For it is only when his teaching gives great pleasure to himself, that it can give any pleasure whatever to his pupils. The parent must not grudge to a worthy teacher the most liberal reward that lies within his means. It is not to be supposed that any large body of men can be induced to devote themselves heart and soul to an ill-paid profession, which demands peculiar talents and expensive training, with a toil both in preparation and in action that can never be remitted.

Crotchet the Third. Of the child taught. There is no fault of character in boy or girl that cannot be destroyed or rendered harmless, if right treatment be applied to it in time ; that is to say, within the first twelve years. We inherit tempers and tendencies which sometimes, when they are neglected, bring us to harm. The bent of character is settled before birth. Anything cannot be made of any boy or girl, but something can be made of every child, which shall be satisfactory, and good, and useful. The tendency that would, under a course of neglect or bad management, produce out of a cross infant a self-willed and dogged man, may be so managed as to develop into firmness tempered with right judgment. Mismanagement at home hinders good management at school, and, for a generation or two, that difficulty will hurt the operation of the best school systems. There belong, however, to the spirit of childhood and youth, qualities through which a true-hearted appeal is sure of a true-hearted reception. Children are good, and they are so created by Divine Wisdom as to be wonderfully teachable. They are, however, also so created as to require free action and movement, to be incapable of sustaining long-continued mental exertion, to be restless. It is not in the constitution of a child to sit day after day for three or five consecutive hours upon a form. If the schoolmaster subjects children to unnatural conditions, and Nature asserts herself in any boy or girl more visibly than disci-

pline admires, the teacher, not the child, is then in fault, and it is he or she — if any one — who would stand in the corner, do an imposition, be whipped. It is only possible to teach a child well, while accommodating one's ways humbly to the ways of Nature.

Crotchet the Fourth. On the constitution of a school. Since there is no such thing as a plan universal for all teachers ; since each school should maintain its own individuality ; since a school of which the plan is an abstraction is a dead school ; I can only express my notions on this subject by explaining what sort of a crotchet my own notion of school-keeping was, and how it answered. Let me be at the same time careful to reiterate, that I do not propose it as a nostrum, but that, on the contrary, I should hold cheaply the wit of any one who copied it exactly in practice. I only want my principles adopted — nothing more. One notion of mine was, that if children could be interested really in their studies — as they can be — so long as they were treated frankly and led by their affections, the work of education could be carried on entirely without punishment. I had been, as a boy, to many schools, and knew how dread begot deception, and we were all made, more or less, liars by the cane. Even our magnanimity consisted frequently in lying for each other, and obtaining for ourselves the floggings that impended over friends. I knew how deceits rotted the whole school intercourse to which I had myself been subject ; how teachers, made distrustful, showered about accusations of falsehood ; how we cribbed our lessons, and were led to become sly and mean. I do not mean to lay it down as a principle that schools should be conducted without punishment ; I can conceive a dozen kinds of men who would know how to do good, with a few floggings judiciously administered. But I was not one of the dozen — I should certainly have done harm. Corporal punishments being abolished, there remained few others. For, I uphold it as a principle, that punishments which consist in the transformation of the school-room to a prison, or in treating studies and school-books as if they were racks and thumb-screws — instruments of torture to be applied against misdoers, in the shape of something to write or something to learn — to learn, forsooth ! — defeat the purposes of education, heap up and aggravate the disgust which it should be the business of a good teacher carefully to remove as it arises.

I set out, therefore, with the belief that I could dispense wholly with punishment, if I could establish perfect openness of speech and conduct in the school. Accordingly, a little ceremony of signing a book was established on the entry of each pupil, whereby the signer formally promised in all dealings with his teacher or his companions “to act openly and speak the

truth." All motive to deception being as much as possible withdrawn, the strongest motive penalty could give, was put in the other scale; for it was established as a fundamental law, that a first falsehood would be forgiven, but that after a second the offender would be required to leave the school. This law was taken, as it was made, in sober earnest. There was only one transgressor, a youth of fifteen, blunted in feeling by a long course of mismanagement. He did not remain with us three months. Systems, and very good systems too, according with the individuality of other teachers, would provide for cases of that kind; mine did not. It was so far faulty. It would suit forty-nine children out of fifty, but the fiftieth would need another kind of discipline. A little pains being taken to keep up the feeling, perfect openness was secured, and no tale-telling was possible, for every one told frankly his own offence.

And that too was the case, although it was found in practice not quite possible to go on wholly without pains and penalties. At first, when there were half a dozen pupils, all went well; but when the number had increased, though all continued to go well, and the best spirit was shown by the children, it was not possible for them, gathered in groups, to exercise so much self-control as they might themselves wish, and as was necessary for a reasonable discipline. The joyousness and restlessness of youth, not being chilled in any way, would now and then break out at inconvenient times, and every idler was a cause of interruption to his neighbors. Penalties were therefore established. They were of the lightest kind, and represented nothing but the gain or loss of credit. They would have been ridiculous, except in as far as they were applied to children anxious to prove their resolution to do right.

Rewards were established with the penalties, and it is necessary to explain their nature first. I think it may be laid down as a principle, that the practice of urging school-boys, or even young men, into fierce competition for a book, a medal or a sum of money, hurts more than it helps, the work of earnest education. The true teacher ought not to give prominence to an unworthy motive for exertion; only a false teacher does that, to escape, in an artificial way, some of the consequences which result from the false principles on which he goes to work. It was my crotchet to give nobody a book for being more quick-witted than his neighbor; but, as much as possible, to set each working for his own sake, and to fix a common standard—not of intellect, but of application and attention, which each was to endeavor singly to attain. It was possible that, at the end of a half-year, every pupil might receive a first-prize. It was certain that, as prize or present, every one would receive a book, and that although there were first, second, and third

prizes, the difference between them was not to consist in money-value.

This was our system of penalties, by which alone the little state of children was held in sufficient check :—Whoever, during work-time, was a cause of interruption, had an interruption marked against him. If he interrupted three times, it was said that he lost half-a-day ; if six times, he lost the day, and, for the day, had nothing more to lose. If he chose — as he never did choose — it was to be supposed that, having got so far, he might make as much noise as he pleased thereafter. Gay spirits now and then indulged themselves in the luxury of two offences against order, stopping at the third. Every offence against discipline went by the name of interruption ; and we called a day a ticket. At the end of the half-year, each pupil's lost days were counted, and according to their number was the number of his prize. Within the cover of his book was pasted a small printed form, which, being filled up, carried abroad the exact intelligence that its owner had been present and attentive at school a certain number of days, absent or inattentive another certain number of days, and had received that book as a first, second, or third prize. The success of this plan was greater than a man putting no faith in children might suppose. Stout boys, who could pull at an oar with a strong arm, were not too big to cry, sometimes, over a lost half-day. The ages of the pupils ranged between eight and fifteen. Now and then, it happened that some great event outside, such as the freezing of a pond, produced an irrepressible excitement. Common restraints would not check talking and inattention. The punishment then introduced is horrible to tell : — There was no teaching ! All lessons were put aside. Instead of extra lessons, for a punishment, no lessons appeared to me the best mark of supreme displeasure. Lessons were not to be regarded as their pain, but as their privilege ; when they became too unmanageable, the privilege was, for a time, withdrawn. Whatever you may choose to call a punishment, becomes one to an honest and well-meaning child. Stoppage of lessons checked all turbulence at once, and the school looked like a dismal wax-work exhibition until the prohibition was withdrawn.

Children are very teachable, and it is just as easy to excite in them, and to lead them by, a sense of honor and self-respect, as to spur them on, by promoting among them rivalries and jealousies, and to try to drive them out of mischief with a cane.

Having explained our criminal code, let me describe next our ordinary constitution, which was from beginning to end one shock to the feelings of Quemaribus when I detailed it to him. Children are not fond of gloom or ugliness ; and it is not won-

derful if they have little admiration for the customary school-room and its furniture. My crotchet on that subject was, that the best room in the teacher's house should be the school-room, and that he should do all he in reason could to give it a cheerful and even elegant appearance. The school of which I speak, was established by the seashore, and there was a very fine view from our school-room window. It must be confessed that there was plenty to look at, and sometimes certainly a ship or a donkey would appear at inconvenient seasons ; but, as we did not shut the world out from our teaching, there was no good reason why it should be shut out from our eyes. There was a back room used for supplementary purposes, but the front room was the main work-place. I was the first tenant of the house, and papered it. For that school-room, in defiance of all prejudice, and in the mad pursuance of my crotchet, I chose the most elegant light paper I could find — a glazed paper, with a pure white ground, under a pattern that interfered little with the whiteness and delicacy of the whole effect. After two years of school-work in that room, it being always full, the paper was left almost without a soil. There had been a few ink-spots that could readily be scratched out with a knife, and one mishap with an inkstand, of which the traces were sufficiently obliterated with the help of a basin of cold water.

Upon the mantelpiece were vases, which the children themselves kept supplied with flowers. The room was carpeted, and it must be granted that the carpet soon wore out. There were neat little cane chairs instead of forms, cheerful-looking tables instead of school desks. The aspect of the room was as cheerful as I could contrive to make it, and was a great shock to the prejudices of Dr. Quemaribus. It did contain, however, a blackboard, a pair of little globes, and a great map of the world : — to which our references were so incessant, and I believe often so pleasant, that I think we all were glad to be familiar with its features.

Dr. Q. called on us one Monday morning, before his own Christmas holidays were over — ours being short — and he made a grimace when he found us very snugly seated about the room, one stirring the fire, and all talking about the news of the day. I was insane enough to devote every Monday morning to that sort of study, and the Doctor candidly confessed before he left that it was not altogether folly. Boys accustomed to discussions upon history, looked at contemporary events from points of view that appeared quaint to him and not entirely useless. They bewildered him by their minute acquaintance with the recent discoveries at the North Pole, which they had acquired while their hearts were full of sympathy for Sir John Franklin. There was a new scientific discovery, of which

they were endeavoring to understand as much as possible, and they were criticising social movements in a startling way. The Doctor observed too, how the tempers and the humors of the children were displayed in this free talk, and how easy it became, without effort or ostentation, to repress in any one an evil tendency — the tendency, perhaps, to pass summary and contemptuous opinions — and to educate the intellects of all. A great deal may be done when all seem to be doing nothing. When news was scarce, and time was plentiful, we filled that morning with a lesson upon what we entitled "common knowledge." That topic recurred two or three times a week, and was concerned with reasonings and explanations on the commonest of every-day words and things.

We divided the day into two very distinct parts. Half was spent upon book-study, as of languages, arithmetic, and mathematics ; the other half upon history and science. I began to struggle — through the history of man — fully enough to occupy over the task five or six hours a week, and get to the end in about three years. In the same time, we were to get through the story of the world about us, and complete the circle of the sciences. Geography we learned insensibly with history and science, filling up our knowledge of it with the reading of good books of travel. In these studies, the interest taken by the children was complete ; but partly because I felt that there was insecurity in oral teaching by itself, partly because I wished to see how we were getting on, a practice was established of mutual examination in all things taught verbally to the whole school together. All were parted into two sides, matched pretty evenly, whose work it was to puzzle one another. The sides were often shifted, for the eagerness of competition became sometimes greater than was wholesome ; though it was a pure game of the wits, in which there was no tangible reward held out to the victor. Very proud I felt at the first trial, when I heard questions asked and answered upon facts in history or natural history, or explanations of familiar things taught verbally, in some cases, twelve months ago. It was felt to be of no use to ask anything told within a month or two, because that probably would not have been forgotten. I got a book and entered every question that was asked, wording it in my own way, but altering or prompting nothing ; and the book now lies before me, an emphatic proof of the degree and kind of interest that children, taught without compulsion and allowed to remark freely upon all that they are doing, can take in the acquisition of hard knowledge. They began curiously with thoughts rather than things ; and with thoughts, too, that had not been discussed among us for a twelvemonth. "Why does China stand still in her civilization ?" was asked first ; that being answered,

the other side returned fire with the same kind of shot, "Why did our civilization begin on the shores of the Mediterranean?" That was remembered, and there was a return-question ready, "Upon what does the advance of civilization depend chiefly?" That, too, was known, and there was a shot more in the locker, "Why is England so particularly prosperous — why not some other island?" Then, there was a change of theme; a demand for the habits of the sexton-beetle was returned again in kind by a demand for ditto of the ant-lion; and upon the white ants there was a retort made with the gad-fly and the Bosphorus. Then, one side grew nautical, and wanted a description of all the parts of an ancient ship-of-war. They were remembered — for the topic was but a few months old — and the retort was, "Describe the spy-boats of the ancient Britons." That day's engagement ended with the question, "Why is it close and warm in cloudy weather?" to which the return-inquiry was, "Why is it colder as you rise into the air, though you get nearer to the sun?" Every question asked that day, was fairly answered. On the next day of battle, I find one side asking to be shown the course of the chief ocean-currents, and the other demanding to be told what causes ebb and flow of tide, spring and neap tides, and to be shown the course of the tide-wave. I find questions, in the same day, on the wars of Hannibal, the twinkling of the stars, the theory of coral-reefs, the construction of the barometer and thermometer, the tide of the Mediterranean, and how one branch of a fruit-tree can be made to bear more than the rest. Farther on, I find such questions asked as the difference between ale and porter, between treacle and molasses, how a rope is made, how spines are formed on shells, when linen was first used in Europe, and what is the use of eyebrows and eyelashes.

After this system of mutual examination was established, a new phase of our school-life displayed itself. The oral-teaching, which had evidently not been thrown away, was cultivated with new care; a great system of note-taking arose; all kinds of spontaneous efforts were made to retain things in the memory; and the result was, that, as I read before I taught, and could not remain always so full of information on a topic as I was while teaching it, the children over and over again remembered more than I did. I soon needed all my wits not to be nonplussed myself when they were laboring to nonplus one another.

Now if work of this kind can be done merrily, stopping at the end of every hour for five minutes of play, and throughout without any employment of a harsh restraint; if, over work of this kind, faults of character or temper can be easily and perfectly corrected — as with us, in two or three instances, they were —

a spirit of inquiry can be begotten. That done, a boy can be made to feel the use and enjoy the exercise of education, and in the end will turn out eager to go on acquiring knowledge for himself. Surely if this be so, there must be something rotten in existing school-systems, planned upon the models set up in the middle ages! Truly, I think there is great room for a Luther among schoolmasters; and I do marvel greatly at the pertinacity with which society adheres, in these days, to scholastic usages whereof familiarity breeds in it no contempt.—*Household Words.*

CHILDHOOD.

[From the Home Journal.]

(Continued from page 356, November Number.)

“The taste for comedy, at least in a finished form, is of later date. It implies familiarity with the follies and foibles of the world; it suits the pococurantism of manhood better than an enthusiastic and reverent age; it belongs to a habit of mind critical rather than creative. It is quite true that boys, especially school-boys, *have a very lively sense of what is ridiculous, and still more of what is ludicrous.* No sobriquets elaborated in after life by the ingenuity of party warfare, hit the mark so well as those in vogue at school—launched by the careless hand, and forged in an instant by the ready wit and happy versatility of boys. But, notwithstanding all this playful humor, the other element preponderates below the surface. Thus Dickens is generally a greater favorite with boys than Thackeray.

“But the child’s idea of a future state—in this point again he resembles the Greeks of old—is rather a continuation of the happy home in which he lives, than a new heaven and a new earth. He cannot conceive it otherwise—and why should he? Through the operation of the same cause, it is mercifully ordained that his mind is easily diverted from a morbid scrutiny into its own faults, and thus disengaged of the heavy burden that would otherwise impede the onward course. Perhaps this consideration tends to explain, what has been called,*

* The passage is so beautiful, that we cannot refrain from quoting it entire:—
“Truly it is a mystery, that strange privilege which boyhood alone seems to possess of being at once sinful and light-hearted. It is, as it were, the mingling of the pure and the impure, in the same cup, without the whole draught becoming polluted. In after years guilt has its moments of wild and feverish delight; but boys, and boys alone, can sin, and be sorry for awhile, and then fling aside all thought of it, and feel as though they had never sinned at all. In infancy the consciousness of sin is a thing unknown, in manhood it presses on the heart like an ever-present burden; but in boyhood it is like an April cloud,

in one of the little books mentioned above, ‘an inscrutable mystery in boyhood ;’ the rapid facility with which the sorrows of repentance are effaced by returning lightness of heart. The deliberate propension of manhood, once perverted from its proper objects, needs a hard and bitter struggle before it can be restored them again. ‘If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !’ But, while the ruling faculty, the reason, is less capable of withstanding the rude caprice of the undisciplined passions, there is more hope, and less bitterness of remorse.

“Another characteristic of the young — one which they have in common with the fair sex — is the *personal* aspect in which they regard things ; the disposition to refer everything to the person from whom it proceeds, or to whom it belongs, and to judge of it accordingly. Principles and opinions are invested by them with the associations belonging to the persons who support or impugn them. *The personal authority of the teacher, his claims to affection or respect, have more efficacy with them than the independent evidence of what he inculcates.* Nor can it be regretted, that their reason, immature at present, and ill-prepared to enter into the strife of opinions, should be naturally disposed to attach itself to the guides placed within reach by Providence, and to submit to them almost implicitly. A time must come, for educated minds at least, when they cannot conscientiously evade the arduous duty of examining and pronouncing for themselves. But it is foolish to anticipate prematurely this painful responsibility.

“Again, *children*, like some of the most intelligent among domesticated brute creatures, *have a quick and intuitive sense of character*. They are skilful to read its hieroglyphics in the look, voice, manner, and general appearance. They feel themselves unaccountably attracted or repelled by the different persons with whom they are brought into contact ; and these prepossessions seldom prove mistaken. They are great hero worshippers. Virtue to them is no lifeless abstraction — no ‘*bona res*’ — nor yet a frigid and decorous personification. To find a way into their hearts, she must appear like the gods of Homer — in the real flesh and blood of some great and good man. As soon as they begin to be initiated into the busy controversies of the political world, they become violent partisans. With the party to which they are attached, resides all right and goodness ; out of its pale all are aliens and foes. Castles in the air, beautiful and unsubstantial, ‘rise like an exhalation ;’ or ‘like the airy fabric of a dream,’ doomed, alas ! ‘to melt away before the light of common day.’ Cherished theories of Utopian perfec-

which flits over the landscape, darkening it for a while, and then passing away altogether, and leaving it as bright as ever. Of all the mysteries of boyhood this is perhaps the most inscrutable.” — *Charlton School, or the Cherry Stones.*

tion, and the eager pursuit of unattainable ends, lure on the willing dupe ; until as years pass away, tired of the hopeless chase '*he learns to understand that to strive after good, rather than to attain it, is the portion allotted to man by God in this life.*' It may be added, that children are little, if at all, affected by worldly considerations in choosing their friends. Rank and riches are nothing to them, in comparison with real personal attractions. *Tuft-hunting*, or '*flunkism*', as it is now called, too often the bane of society among the grown-up children of the world, is almost, if not utterly, unknown at school. Prowess at cricket or foot-ball — feats of bodily strength and activity — deeds of 'pluck' and hardihood — the value of qualifications like these may be overrated at school ; but, after all, the higher excellences of generosity, kindliness, and candor, never fail to be appreciated there. The self-aggrandizing spirit, which torments men in after years with a constant anxiety to form 'good connections,' and so to rise one step higher in the social scale, may sometimes intrude itself even into College life, and interfere, more or less, with the sincerity of its intercourse ; but is powerless to infuse its base alloy into the genuine affection of early friendship.

"Children, it has been said, by no less an authority than Johnson, are naturally cruel. But, despite the weight of so great a name, a charge like this will not need much refutation among those who have studied the ways of boys. Very heedless of consequences they often are — and scarcely familiar enough with pain and suffering by their own experience, to estimate rightly what they are inflicting ; but they must be acquitted of intentional or deliberate cruelty. *Their 'love of mischief' is in the main an experimentalizing curiosity.* Another accusation brought against them — it occurs in a book full of thoughtful advice on the subject of education, '*Early Influences*,' by Mrs. Montgomery — is, that they are not naturally truthful. It might have been supposed, that, if anywhere, truth would delight to dwell in so pure an abode as the breast of little children. It would be difficult to connect the idea of falsity with their artless simplicity. The fact is, they have a strong innate sense of the badness of a lie : but *the timidity and shrinking from pain inseparable from a tender age, easily avail to overpower the natural propensity to truth. Thus an appearance of insincerity is produced.* A similar explanation might be applied to the national character of the Italians and Hindoos. Reserved, except to the few who understand them, children are very liable to sudden gusts of changefulness, but they are not often deceitful nor untrue."

The writer has a long passage, which we wish we had room to quote, on the value of an *indirect mode of teaching*, or the

embodiment of abstract truth in narrative. Such a mode of writing "wins its way more easily into the understanding — quickens the attention — inspires the feelings — is retained more lastingly — gives more exercise to the imagination." "And then it is no small gain to substitute what is pleasurable for a comparatively painful process; especially in the treatment of *that part of human life which seems intended by God to be a season of enjoyment while it lasts, whatever troubles may be awaiting its mature manhood.*"

But we like the writer's

UPHOLDING OF FAIRY STORIES.

"But what are we to say of the *compendia of useful knowledge which threaten, in some quarters, to dislodge the beneficent fairy, with her wonder-working wand and ubiquitous and multiform genius?* It is difficult to see how any moral influence can be exercised through such channels on the youthful mind, which has need as yet rather to be *formed* than *filled*. A naked list of dates or other facts, with which the feelings have nothing to do, and in which, as yet, the understanding can recognize little or nothing, is a mere nonentity to the child. It sinks as a dead load into the memory, overtaxing the mechanical powers of retention, whilst it kindles not a spark of feeling nor generates a single genial thought. But let a child's ready sympathy be excited, let the travelled merchant of Bagdad unfold the secrets of his furrowed brow, and the solitary Crusoe detail by what ingenious contrivances he has fenced out the wild beast from his own savage den, and barely kept soul and body together at the peril of both, in his lonely island, no danger will there be lest the adventures or devices of either should appear to the child too fanciful or minute. He finds no fault with the lavish exercise of supernatural power by friendly or malicious genius ; where the marvellous, however absurd to older ears, is so plausible and consistent, so devoutly believed by the several characters of the story — no wonder is it that a child should welcome each new marvel with even heightened interest.

"Again, the poetry in which childhood has been said to share so largely, though unconsciously, is not manifested in occasional outbursts of feeling on the active homage which a poet loves to offer to the beautiful ; it is not something often banished, and continually overshadowed by the daily formalities of common life, scared by the 'dry light' of science, and the cold analysis to which thought and feeling are subjected in manhood ; rather is it a constant stream of silent joy, beating with every pulse, and pervading every sensation. It has no voice of its own to raise,

but all the more does it find in the flowers of Eastern language an expression of its own secret impulse ; nor need any fear be entertained, lest a mind dieted on such imaginative food in childhood should grow up fantastic or superstitious. In the present state of society such a fear is groundless. The danger, now-a-days, is all the other way ; and let us beware how, in our fancied wisdom, we undervalue such a talent for appreciation of the marvellous—for from whom did modern science draw its light, and modern art and letters the originating impulse of its excellence, and the models which have provoked its imitative powers—from whom but that race, whose every stream and mountain was hallowed by its appropriate legend, and enshrined as it were, the personal presence of its god or hero ?”

It is a truth we seem to forget, that the *imagination* of man is the precursor of his *understanding*. The child’s glimpses into the unseen world serve at least to lay something up in reserve which can lift him from the petty and sordid cares of life, when the soul shall need such relief.

We conclude our extracts from this writer, with his remarks on

OVER-EDUCATION.

“ Among the great faults of the present day in this country are superficial intellectuality, want of originality, and dissipation of power; an imperfect and discursive acquaintance with many studies, instead of intense concentration upon one, according to the bias of the individual—morally, an excessive anxiety, a harassing ambition to ‘rise in the world,’ and a morbid self-consciousness destructive of energetic action. The abatement of these evil tendencies, doubtless, depends much on early culture. Books for the young, we have endeavored to show, should be entertaining, fitted to nourish the affections and imagination rather than the logical faculty, indirectly instructive and suggestive rather than exhaustive of their subject, presenting images of good to be followed, rather than of evil to be shunned. Above all, children must not be taught too much nor too soon. Knowledge is sometimes a hurtful burden; too much of it in proportion to the natural powers destroys originality and substitutes an unreal and insipid taste, an unconscious hypocrisy. If the dialectic faculties are later in their development than the emotions, the memory, the imagination, and the apprehension of the senses, it cannot be disputed that the young may best be influenced by personal authority and personal example; nor that the study of languages naturally comes first in order, next the events of history and human life, last of all the abstractions of Philosophy—first words; then things;

lastly ideas. As the sense of hearing is most acute in the dark, as the fancy is most inventive in the glimmering twilight, so the memory is most impressible and most tenacious, the feelings are most susceptible, before they are reduced under the severe control of the mature intellect enlightened by reflection. With all that is being done for the reform of our modes of training the young, *we have still to struggle with the evils of an indiscriminate and premature education.* Goethe, in his *Wilhelm Meister*, sagaciously protests against a uniform dress for his Utopian schoolboys. To discover the embryo genius, if he had any, of each boy, and to give it especial cultivation, was one secret of the influence of the Jesuits. They knew that our wishes are the prognostication of our powers. With us in Great Britain it is different. Not in large schools only, but in the narrower circle of home, it is too often to be deplored, that those who have care of the young, and who ought to know of each one, what he is, and what he is best able to do, fail to observe their several traits, and to shape their rough-hewn capacities to the proper end. The other evil is even more serious. The anxiety to make clever children defeats itself — it spoils thousands who might be clever men. *Not a few, and those the most promising — children, for example, like Hartley Coleridge — require to be positively kept back, not urged onwards.* In his pitiable case it was not the predominance of fancy in his childhood that was unhealthy, but the unboyish consciousness of self. Games at play with other boys would have been far better for him than to sit listening with greedy ears to the philosophers of the Lakes. The two greatest among our British poets, Shakspeare and Milton, both speak complainingly of their 'late spring.' Their regrets were unheeded. Better, far better that it should be so, than that the fruits, nipped and shrunk, should belie the promise of the abundant blossom. *Let each period of life wear its own garb, and play its own part.* For old age there is rest — persevering activity for manhood — and for childhood the grace and beauty and careless happiness which are peculiarly its own."

PRUSSIAN SCHOOLS A FEW YEARS AGO.

DINTER, in his autobiography, gives some surprising specimens of gross incapacity in teachers, even subsequent to 1819. The following anecdotes are from that interesting work, *Dinter's Leben von ihm selbst beschrieben.*

In the examination of a school in East Prussia, which was taught by a subaltern officer dismissed from the army, the teacher gave Dinter a specimen of his skill in the illustration of

Scripture narrative. The passage was Luke vii, the miracle of raising the widow's son of Nain. "See, children, (says the teacher,) Nain was a great city, a beautiful city; but even in such a great, beautiful city, there lived people who must die. *They brought the dead youth out.* See, children, it was the same then as it is now—dead people could n't go alone — they had to be carried. *He that was dead began to speak.* This was a sure sign that he was alive again, for if he had continued dead he could n't have spoken a word."

In a letter to the king, a dismissed schoolmaster complained that the district was indebted to him 200,705 dollars. Dinter supposed the man must be insane, and wrote to the physician of the place to inquire. The physician replied that the poor man was not insane, but only ignorant of the numeration table, writing 200,70,5 instead of 275. Dinter subjoins, "By the help of God, the King, and good men, very much has now been done to make things better."

In examining candidates for the school-teacher's office, Dinter asked one where the Kingdom of Prussia was situated. He replied, that he believed it was somewhere in the southern part of India. He asked another the cause of the ignis fatuus, commonly called Jack-a-lantern. He said they were spectres made by the devil. Another being asked why he wished to become a school-teacher, replied, that he must *get a living somehow.*

A military man of great influence once urged Dinter to recommend a disabled soldier, in whom he was interested, as a school-teacher. "I will do so," says Dinter, "if he sustains the requisite examination." "O," says the Colonel, "he does n't know much about school-teaching, but he is a good, moral, steady man, and I hope you will recommend him to oblige me." *D.*—*O* yes, Colonel, to oblige you, if you in your turn will do me a favor. *Col.*—What is that? *D.*—Get me appointed drum-major in your regiment. True I can neither beat a drum, nor play a fife; but I am a good, moral, steady man as ever lived.

A rich landholder once said to him, "Why do you wish the peasant children to be educated? it will only make them unruly and disobedient." Dinter replied, "If the masters are wise, and the laws good, the more intelligent the people, the better they will obey."

Dinter complained that the military system of Prussia was a great hindrance to the schools. A nobleman replied that the young men enjoyed the protection of the government, and were thereby bound to defend it by arms. Dinter asked if every stick of timber in a house ought first to be used in a fire-engine, because the house was protected by the engine? or whether it

would be good policy to cut down all the trees of an orchard to build a fence with, to keep the hogs from eating the fruit?—
Nat. Ed. in Europe.

[For The Massachusetts Teacher.]

PHONETIC SPELLING.

THE November number of the Teacher contains an article on this subject from "Trench on Words," which has been published in the Teacher before, and is now, by some unaccountable error of the proof-reader, printed with the heading of an original communication.

I agree with Mr. Trench that the general introduction of a phonetic alphabet would be useless, because the language is not unchangeable, and therefore "before long there would again be a chasm between the spelling and the pronunciation of words."

But his "deeper and more serious objection" to phonetic spelling is not well founded. The very classes of words which he instances, in which ph takes the place of φ and y of i, so far from aiding the student to detect analogy with the Greek, serve to hide that analogy in all words not spelled with ph and y. In those words which were early introduced from Greek to Latin, φ was introduced as f. Indeed, the form of f was borrowed from φ. Yet, by our pernicious habit of calling φ *pee aitch*, we effectually hide the derivation of words spelled with an f. Mr. Trench's remarks on this subject are on a par with those which he quotes from Lord Bacon, and may go down to posterity coupled with Lord Bacon's sneers at the science of electricity, or his contemptuous remarks on the teleological doctrines which in the hands of Cuvier and Agassiz have led to such invaluable results.

Turning from this brilliant piece of special pleading against phonetics, and looking soberly at the whole subject, I cannot but be astonished that the teachers of our common schools do not more eagerly seize the advantages which are offered by the use of a phonetic type as a means of education. The amount of labor saved in learning to spell, said by Mr. Trench to be absurdly exaggerated, I say cannot be exaggerated. It is the whole difficulty of learning. It is the one great cause of ignorance. Few adults would remain ignorant of reading if phonetic books were in every house.

But the advantages of a phonetic type are not confined to learning to spell. Such a type makes teaching to read a pleasant task, learning to read an attractive, fascinating thing to the child, and the moral effect of this is worth a great deal. It also serves as an admirable drill for older classes, in pronunciation.

It is of great advantage in teaching foreigners our language, an advantage which in this land of immigration is not to be overlooked.

The advantages of the phonetic short hand are still greater, as an educational agent, and the objections brought against the general use of a phonetic print do not lie against the use of phonetic writing.

In the public schools, therefore, which I have the honor of overseeing, we have introduced the phonetic print, and phonetic short hand, and after a trial of two years, cordially recommend the other schools of the State to do likewise.

H.

IN our last we made an extract from *The Schoolmate*, giving some account of the Boston public schools, their names, and studies. But, as it omitted the list of books required to be used in the girls' schools, we extract the following from the City School Superintendent's *last report*, Article 1⁶th :

"The books and exercises for the several classes of the Girls' schools, shall be as follows :—

"*Class 4.* No. 1. Swan's Spelling Book. 2. Tower's Gradual Reader. 3. Writing in Books, on Root's, Northend's, Badlam's, or Winchester's system. 4. Greenleaf's Mental Arithmetic, the edition heretofore used.

"*Class 3.* No. 1. Swan's Spelling Book. 2. Russell's Sequel to the Primary Reader. 3. Writing, as in fourth class. 4. North American Arithmetic, Part Second. 5. Parley's First Book of History, combined with Geography, to be used chiefly as a reading book, and as a medium of oral instruction in Geography.

"*Class 2.* No. 1. Spelling from reading lesson. 2. Tower and Walker's Reader. 3. Writing in Boston school writing books, with written or engraved copies. 4. North American Arithmetic, Part Second. 5. Mitchell's Geography, Atlas, and Questions, with exercises in Map Drawing upon the blackboard and otherwise. 6. Bullions's Analytical and Practical Grammar. 7. Exercises in Composition. 8. Exercises in Drawing. 9. Worcester's Dictionary.

"*Class.* 1. No. 1. Spelling from reading lesson. 2. Reading in American First Class Book. 3. Writing. 4. North American Arithmetic, Part Third, or Robinson's American Arithmetic. 5. Mitchell's Geography, Atlas, and Questions, with exercises in Map Drawing on the blackboard and otherwise. 6. Bullions's Analytical and Practical Grammar. 7. Exercises in Composition. 8. Exercises in Drawing. 9. Worcester's Dictionary. 10. Robinson's Bookkeeping. 11. Worcester's History. 12. Hall's Manual of Morals—a Mon-

day-morning lesson, with oral instruction. 13. Instruction in Natural Philosophy, using Parker's Compendium of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, or Olmsted's Rudiments of Natural Philosophy as a text-book, with the Philosophical Apparatus provided for the schools, shall be given by the master to such portion of the first class as can attend thereto, without neglect of the foregoing course of studies; and on the same condition the following exercises and studies are permitted in the Girls' schools, under the direction of the masters and Sub-Committees, to be taken up in the order arranged, as follows, and in no other.

- "1. Jarvis's Practical Physiology.
 - "2. Smellie's Philosophy of Natural History.
 - "3. Sherwin's School Algebra.
 - "4. Tillinghast's Plane Geometry."
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ESSEX COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

THE 25th annual meeting of this Association was held at Georgetown, on Friday and Saturday, 20th and 21st insts. The Association was called to order at 11 o'clock, A. M., on Friday, by J. B. Fairfield, Vice President, and opened by prayer by Rev. Isaac Braman, of Georgetown. Owing to a detention on the Danvers and Georgetown Railroad, the lecturer and the greater part of the teachers did not reach the place of meeting till nearly 12 o'clock, and no business of importance was transacted till afternoon. A large number of teachers were present. The lecturers were M. P. Case, Esq., of Salem, Ariel Parish, Esq., of Springfield, Charles Northend, Esq., of Salem, and Elbridge Smith, Esq., of Cambridge. An extended range of topics was presented, many of which were freely discussed by the teachers and other friends of education; among whom, were Messrs. Greenleaf, of Bradford; Case, Edwards, Carlton, and Northend, of Salem; Parish, of Springfield; Newton, of Newburyport; Jacob Batchelder, of Lynn; Pike and Walton, of Lawrence; Baker, of Gloucester; and Dr. Spofford, of Georgetown.

The following is a list of the officers elected for the ensuing year:

M. P. Case, of Salem, President; J. S. Eaton, of Andover, Vice President; A. G. Boyden, of Salem, Corresponding Secretary; J. W. Upton, of Lynn, Recording Secretary; E. Valentine, of Marblehead, Treasurer; R. Putnam, of Beverly, Rev. J. P. Cowles, of Ipswich, R. Edwards, of Salem, N. A. Moulton, of Salem, Jacob Batchelder, of Lynn, M. O. Hall, of Newburyport, Counsellors.

G. A. WALTON, *Rec. Sec.*

Lawrence, Oct. 24, 1854.

MR. HEDGE'S REMARKS ON ARITHMETIC,

BEFORE THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

AT 11 1-2 o'clock, the President announced a Discussion on Arithmetic. Mr. Nathan Hedges, of Newark, N. J., by previous appointment, opened the Discussion, and spoke as follows:

Mr. President and Fellow Teachers:—In rising to assume my part in opening this discussion, it is but justice to myself to say, that although not entirely unused to public speaking, yet on this occasion, and on a subject seemingly so plain, I have felt an embarrassment unusual and uncomfortable.

In forecasting, as it was certainly proper that I should, what line of remarks would be likely to convey the most useful hints and suggestions, I at first thought to speak of Arithmetic as a science to which some have devoted many years of labor, but it occurred to me that I should be surrounded by many whose names are well and widely known in connection with that branch of education, and I would not seem to offer an intimation or hint to such.

I then thought that I would speak of Arithmetic as an art; but, among all this people, how few are there that are conscious, in the least degree, of any lack of ability in the art of computation. Again, I thought that I would speak of Arithmetic as a useful branch filling a large place in our schemes of education, especially in common school education; but this is one of those questions to which there is only one side, and I found it would be almost impossible even to promote a discussion on such a view of the subject.

This reduced me to the condition that our boys often find themselves (and we do not pity them enough) when they have written three or four compositions upon one subject, and another is required of them, upon the same theme. They give up in despair; because the subject is exhausted.

Let us, however, look at the matter again. "Every tree is known by its fruits;" and the work of the teachers of the last generation has been tested, and not very much to its advantage,—by the fruit it has produced. I appeal to the oldest and most experienced teachers here,—is it not true, that, considering the activity and energy of the people among whom we live, and of the business habits of our country,—Is it not true, I say, that the last generation of teachers has failed to give to their pupils that readiness, that promptness, in business calculations, and in the use of numbers, which the exigencies of business require? Farther than this, I appeal to every man conversant with business,—Is it not true, that our most accurate business men have

exultingly testified that their ability was self-acquired. This, if true, is very much to the discredit of the past methods of teaching. Still farther; I appeal to you, gentlemen, as educators, have we not thought too little of Arithmetic as a means for mental discipline, adapted to strengthen the reasoning faculties, inducing consciousness of strength and self-reliance. On the other hand, I appeal to those long in the business, that our pupils go through the book, as they say, and yet, when called upon to go through the most ordinary business transactions and calculations, they cannot tell what rule they are done by. I have seen this for a long course of time, and it has been true of a great proportion of the teaching we have had in the schools.

Now, Gentlemen and Ladies, if these things are true, if there exist these defects in our methods of teaching, if the fruit that our teaching has borne, is not of the kind in every respect that it should be, it is but wise and proper that we should look back, reconsider, and endeavor to discover whether there are any improvements which may be suggested. Here I beg leave to say, that as the one appointed to open this discussion, we have no *real* discussion, no favorite hobbies to ride; I deem my part to be the simple duty of breaking the ice; of preparing the way for others to come forward and contribute what they may have to offer in this discussion.

In order that I may give my remarks a more practical turn, I will, with your permission, look back a little on the history of teaching, and give some of its characteristics for a course of years past. I remember my first teacher. He was a type of many who lived a half century since. I remember that our arithmeticians were placed upon a bench, with a slate and pencil in hand, and our master gave us a large sum in addition, or set down a large sum in multiplication; and with the instruction to carry one for every ten, we were required to do the sum correctly, and the penalty for not doing it, was a not very moderate allowance of hickory. This is a fair sample of the teaching fifty years ago, or earlier. Such teaching I call *rudimentary*.^{*} There were no classes, no instruction, no explanation, no black-board, and for us youngsters, there was no Arithmetic.

The next step in advance is shown by the course of instruction pursued by one who taught in an Academy, and will answer as a type of one of the better class of teachers during the period between 1800 and 1810. His plan, I remember, was to give us, not Greenleaf's Arithmetic, nor any of the others, of which there are now so many good ones, but Dilworth's Arithmetic in one hand, and a quire of paper, called a Ciphers-book, in the

* The noun *rudis* means a rod or stick, in Latin; the adjective *rudis* means rough or uncultivated.

other. With a slate and pencil, we were first to do the sum, and then record it in the Ciphers-book, with such ornaments and embellishments as we might be able to give it. This was continued through the book ; and what we could not do in one year, we might do in another. As yet there were no classes, no blackboards, no adaptation of our Arithmetic to ordinary business transactions—nothing at all to connect the arithmetician's mind with business. It was to a great extent an occult science. Yet the teacher to whom I have alluded was one of the kindest and best of men. He did as well as he knew how, and we learned a little.

The third step forward was at that time when Dilworth's Arithmetic was superseded in our schools, by those of Daboll, Adams, Pike, and others. These were much better adapted to our business transactions than Dilworth's had been, although they tormented us with Massachusetts and New York currency, and a multitude of other things. We now felt that we could touch ground ; we were certain that Arithmetic had a little to do with the actual business of life. It was a great advance ; and as children, we began to feel our strength, and rejoice. Not long after this light began to dawn upon us, the introduction of blackboards into our school-rooms followed. Our arithmeticians were arranged in classes. This improvement took place in 1820. Then there began to be some intercommunication between the teacher and pupil ; they began to live the same life, and to have the same thoughts ; the teacher infused his mind into the mind of the pupil. A new era had commenced, and the pupil began to love his teacher, to love his business, and to feel that he knew something, and could do something.

The present methods of instruction are well known to you, and in most of our schools, are but a modification of these that I have mentioned.

If I were to describe the method most usual in our schools, it would be in a few words, like this. The arithmeticians in each school are arranged into classes, according to the size of the school. Each class has a definite amount of work, which was given out the day previous, and which is to be brought in, written out on the slate to-day. We will say ten sums. Each boy in a class of fifteen or twenty, brings in his ten sums, and is to be able to explain them. He is asked by the teacher if he has done the sums. If the teacher doubts that he has done them himself, he requests him to go to the blackboard, and perform one or more sums dependent upon the same principle in his lesson, and thus tests his knowledge of the principle contained in the rule of the lesson. By this method, which brings each boy before the teacher, it can be shown whether he understands what

he has done, and this enables the teacher to give instruction not simply to one, but to many. Much as I respect those who have devised and have practised this mode of teaching,—and I will venture to say that a majority of those who are present pursue this method,—I will venture to ask if you have found any six, twelve, or twenty boys well classed to-day, and if so, will they be well classed four weeks from to-day? If they are not well classed four weeks from to-day, is not the interval between the 3d and 4th, or 4th and 5th classes too great? Is not the interval too great to allow the best boys in the 4th class to go up into the 3d? Is it not a fact, that some are too slow, and the advance of some too rapid and too impulsive? Do you not have to help along the languid, and hold back the impulsive? Are they able to measure their strength together, as they ought to? Are they disciplined to active, quick, instantaneous thought? I will not enlarge on this subject. Every teacher has seen and felt the difficulties of the plan.

I have a few words more to say, and if they relate somewhat to myself, be pleased not to suppose that I love to speak of myself, but that I desire to contribute a few ideas, the result of experience, which are not to be found in the books.

It is now more than thirty years since, being dissatisfied with the method of teaching Arithmetic then practised, I resolved to ascertain whether others had any better method. For this reason I visited the schools in the neighboring cities, travelled considerable, and learned much that was good on this subject, yet I did not find what I wanted. I returned home, and began to think about the matter. What do I want? I should say here, that, before determining upon any plan of teaching, two simple principles are wanted. First, to give the pupils a use of the principles of Arithmetic, so that promptly, extemporaneously, at all times, and on all occasions, he can use them without stopping to think back to his book. The educator himself must use the Arithmetic as a means of expanding the subject. I inquired, Do my plans answer my wishes? for I desired to make my pupils such as business men would like to secure. Will giving a boy ten sums, and sending him home with a load of books, requiring him to do the sums, or get his mother to help him, perhaps, make him fit to enter the counting-house? Yet this is the way that is generally pursued, and we have an abundance of witnesses to these facts. What shall we do? I will try to make plain to you the course that I pursue. I shall not be able to give you a full idea of the system,—with me the system is the grand thing.

In the first place, let us call out a dozen little boys, just beginning the multiplication table. By the old method they would take the sums home and get some one to help them. I

thought I had better bring them before me, and give them the simplest sum imaginable. Place 428 on the blackboard, and let 2 be the multiplier. See how many can do it. Most of them do it correctly. Some cannot, and they need explanation. Then give them another sum multiplied by 3, 4, and 5, and when they have done, as you think, enough, let them go to their seats. But, suppose a boy in multiplication wants to be promoted to the next rule; what is to be done? Call him out on the floor with the classes promoted in multiplication. Then give him larger and more difficult sums, and if he stands the drilling, very well—he is ready to be promoted; if he cannot stand it, he ought to have more instruction. This method judges each one by his own ability; it brings each one to stand on his own feet; he is never carried forward, or kept back, by a class. This method of teaching a class on the floor may be easily engrafted on other systems. Its advantages are many. The first is, in giving your pupils a thorough drilling. The second is, in determining whether a boy may be promoted. All that is necessary, is to bring forward those boys that are next in advance of him. Give your pupil sums not to be found in the book. You will have plenty of exercises in manuscript. Suppose you put down a number of sums in Interest. The simplest sums may be marked A; the more difficult, B. You can immediately select from these,—if you keep in convenient portfolios,—such as you desire for examples on a given occasion. Now you will find some that are suitable for one who deserves to be promoted out of Interest. “I understand Interest, sir,” says one, “and wish to be promoted into the next rule.” Give him a dozen sums, or even six, where they are difficult, requiring him to do them with those that have been formerly on the floor; with no books, no answers, and no assistance of any kind. This will enable you to determine at once how each pupil stands in that recitation. One may have done them all right; others, nine, some seven, and some two. To make this plan more thorough, I require each one to keep his own record of how many he has done right, and how many he has done wrong. Here they will attempt to deceive, you will say. I think not. I have found it a matter of great consequence to accustom each boy to keep his own record of the number of sums done correctly and incorrectly. When the sum is done, he walks up to me with his slate; I glance at it a moment, and if it is incorrect he walks to the foot. In this way the class is divided. I see who understand, and who need help. By this mode, suppose I give ten difficult sums to the boy that wishes to be promoted, and he does eight of them; he is ready to be promoted to a different rule, for his review will enable him to keep up, as he is constantly called out with others that wish to be promoted.

The next feature is this ; to divide up the subjects of Arithmetic. I usually make forty-five divisions. Instead of having classes in school, and dividing them into three, four, five, or six grades, I divide the subjects of Arithmetic into forty-five grades, classes, and sections. I have a book in which are all my little fellows just beginning addition. These are marked 3d class; 4th, multiplication; 5th, short division; 6th, long division; &c. This illustrates sufficiently that part of the plan. In arranging my record, (I beg leave to say that I have always taught boys,) I have every name on an appropriate page. Now suppose three or four boys on the 18th page come to me and desire to be promoted into the 19th, what is the 18th? The reduction of vulgar fractions to decimals. I immediately turn to the exercises in my portfolio, (I do not turn to the Arithmetic,) containing the kind of sums I wish, and such as contain difficulties that will test the boy's knowledge of that principle. A class of a dozen boys is called out, and they are drilled together in that way. The result is, some of the boys that desire to be promoted, show themselves to be familiar with the principles, and can do the sums promptly, and some cannot. I cross the names of those who are ready for promotion from page 18, and place them on page 19. That boy, then, is promoted because he himself is ready to be promoted; and his promotion interferes with no other boy in school. This, then, is a self-regulating system. It turns out, probably, that some boys that have been promoted become a little rusty. We will take these boys and give them some easier sums in the same rule.

These exercises on the floor, make them ready, and prompt, and self-relying. They learn to think for themselves. There is no stopping to think what is in the book at all, and they can use what they learn, in whatever circumstances they are placed.

This is the method for drilling, as we call it. Any of you may follow out this plan; every boy can determine whether he is at the head or foot, and all is straightforward and plain; there is no such thing as a short cut to arrive at the answer to a sum.

I have taken up more time than I ought; I have spoken more of myself than I wished; I have done it for the sake of travelling outside of the beaten track. I do not wish to proceed as the books do, in every respect. I have spoken, also, to give a few hints to those who are devoting their strength to the great work of teaching. I feel a great desire that every teacher should in this branch, as in others, make instruction effectual. If any one desires to know how this plan works, I will only say that I have pursued it without alteration or modification for twenty-five years, and it stands the only great test; and I believe that some who are here have been in my school. It bears good fruit. I doubt not that in many small schools in the

country, there are many young teachers who are troubled and worried because the pupils make no real advance, who might find themselves able to introduce something like this plan to great advantage.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

THIS Association held its third semi-annual meeting in the Town Hall in Medford, commencing Friday, the 20th ult.

MORNING SESSION.

The members convened at 9 o'clock for a social interview. An hour having thus pleasantly passed, the meeting was called to order by the President, C. C. Chase, Esq., of Lowell. Prayer by Rev. Mr. Marvin, of Medford, after which the Association was favored with congratulatory remarks from the chair, and a hearty welcome from Tho. S. Harlow, Esq., and Rev. J. Pierpont, in behalf of the School Committee and citizens of the place.

The report of the last meeting having been read and adopted, the Association gave its attention to a very interesting and practical lecture from J. Kimball, Esq., of Lowell, upon "The Teacher's Prerogatives."

After having defined the sense of the term, as taken, and spoken of the interest placed in the teacher's hands, the lecturer proceeded to show that these *prerogatives* were derived from a twofold source. 1st. From the connection of teacher with pupil; and 2d. From the connection of the teacher with society at large.

From the first arises his right to require obedience, and use his *own individuality* in imparting instruction.

From the second, his right to a liberal maintenance, and to give influential advice in regard to schools, school-books, school-houses, and school measures.

The lecture closed with a few remarks upon the *Teacher's duties*, arising from the claimed prerogatives, first, to his pupils, and second, to the community at large.

Adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 o'clock.—The lecture of the morning was discussed with much animation by Messrs. E. Smith, of Cambridge, L. P. Frost, of Waltham, Thurston, of Concord, Hathaway, of Medford, and Rev. Mr. Angier, of Concord.

After a recess of five minutes, the fourth resolution upon the circular was taken up for discussion, viz.: "*Resolved*, That it is

improper to allow scholars to aid each other in the preparation of their lessons."—A spirited debate ensued, sustained by Messrs. Fiske, of Lowell, Sawyer, of Medford, Jameson, of Woburn, G. W. Frost, of Waltham, Perry, of Medford, Crosby, of Malden, Thurston, of Concord, and E. Smith, of Cambridge.

Adjourned.

EVENING SESSION.

7 o'clock.—The Fourth Resolution was further discussed, by Messrs. Gale, of Malden, Thurston, Stone, of Woburn, Russell, of Lowell, Hunt, of Newton, and L. P. Frost, of Waltham, when it was laid upon the table, and the Association favored with an able address from Rev. Charles Hammond, Principal Lawrence Academy, Groton.

Adjourned.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

8 1-2 o'clock.—The Third Resolution upon the circular, viz.— "That it is the duty of towns to secure the service of Music Teachers for the benefit of the public schools," was debated by Messrs. Russell, Sawyer, Thurston, J. H. Noyes, of Medford, and L. P. Frost.

The Resolution was then laid upon the table, on motion of C. Cummings, to allow Rev. C. Brooks, of Medford, to address the Association on Physical Education. His remarks were timely and suggestive, calculated to impress the educator with the *responsibility* of his position, and to exhibit clearly the necessity of developing the *body* as well as the *mind*. From the want of proper *physical* training, our people had become characterized for agular features, thin, pale and cadaverous looks, for large heads and spare bodies, for nervous systems, and impaired health. His views were commented upon by several of the teachers.

The Rev. J. Pierpont, of Medford, was then introduced to the audience. His subject, Utilitarianism, was discussed in an able and interesting manner. It would be useless to attempt a report; to be appreciated it should be heard.

The Association offered three prizes of \$5.00 each to the lady members of the Association, for essays upon subjects chosen by themselves. The essays to be sent to one of the following gentlemen: L. P. Frost, Waltham, C. C. Chase, Lowell, Charles Hammond, Groton, by the 15th of March, 1855. After having passed the usual vote of thanks to the Railroads, to the Lecturers, and the people of Medford, the Association adjourned.

J. W. HUNT, *Secretary.*

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